

SAVING FAITH

NO. 1162

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"Your faith has saved you."
Luke 7:50; Luke 18:42.*

I do not remember that this expression is found anywhere else in the Word of God. It is found in these two places in the gospel by Luke, but not in any other gospel; Luke also gives us, in two other places, a kindred and almost identical expression, "Your faith has made you whole." This you will find used in reference to the woman whose issue of blood had been staunched, (Luke 8:48), and in connection with that one of the 10 lepers who returned to praise the Savior for the cure he had received (Luke 17:19). You will find the expression, "Your faith has made you whole" once in Matthew, and twice in Mark, but you find it twice in Luke, and together with the twice repeated words of our text, "Your faith has saved you." Are we wrong in supposing that the long discussions of Luke with the apostle Paul led him not only to receive the great doctrine of justification by faith which Paul so plainly taught, and to attach to faith that high importance which Paul always did, but also to have a peculiar memory for those expressions which were used by the Savior in which faith was manifestly honored to a very high degree? Albeit Luke would not have written anything which was not true for the sake of maintaining the grand doctrine so clearly taught by the apostle, yet I think his full conviction of it would help to recall to his memory more vividly those words of the Lord Jesus from which it could be more clearly learned or illustrated.

Be that as it may, we know that Luke was inspired, and that he has written neither more nor less than what the Savior actually said. Therefore we may be quite sure that the expression, "Your faith has saved you," fell from the Redeemer's lips, and we are bound to accept it as the pure, unquestionable truth of God. And we may repeat it, ourselves, without fear of misleading others, or trenching upon any other truth. I mention this because the other day I heard an earnest friend say that faith did *not* save us, at which announcement I was rather surprised. The brother, it is true, qualified the expression, and showed that he meant to make it clear that Jesus saved us—and not our own *act* of faith. I agreed with what he meant, but not with what he said, for he had no right to use an expression which was in flat contradiction to the distinct declaration of the Savior, "Your faith has saved you." We are not to strain *any* expression to make it mean more than the speaker intended—and it is well to guard words from being misunderstood. But on the other hand, we may not go quite so far as to absolutely make negative a declaration of the Lord, Himself; however we may mean to qualify it! It is to be qualified if you like, but it is *not* to be contradicted, for there it stands: "Your faith has saved you."

Now we shall, this morning, by God's help, inquire *what was it that saved* the two persons whose history will come before us? It was their faith. Our second inquiry will be *what kind of faith was it* which saved them? And then thirdly, *what does this teach us in reference to faith?*

I. WHAT WAS IT THAT SAVED the two persons whose history we are about to consider? In the penitent woman's case, her great sins were forgiven her, and she became a woman of extraordinary love—she loved much, for she had much forgiven. I feel, in thinking of her, something like an eminent father of the church who said, "This narrative is not one which I can well preach upon; I had far rather weep over it in secret." That woman's tears; that woman's unbraided tresses wiping the Savior's feet; her coming so near to her Lord in such company; facing such proud cavilers with such fond and resolute intent of doing honor to Jesus! Verily, among those who have loved the Savior, there has not lived a greater than this woman who was a sinner!

Yet, for all that, Jesus did not say to her, “Your *love* has saved you.” love is a golden apple of the tree of which faith is the root, and the Savior took care not to ascribe to the *fruit* that which belongs only to the root! This loving woman was also right notable for her repentance; Mark you well those tears. Those were no tears of sentimental emotion, but a rain of holy heart-sorrow for sin! She had been a sinner and she knew it; She remembered, well, her multitude of iniquities, and she felt each sin deserved a tear—and there she stood weeping herself away because she had offended her dear Lord! Yet it is not said, “Your *repentance* has saved you.” Her being saved caused her repentance, but repentance did not save her; sorrow for sin is an early token of divine grace within the heart, yet it is nowhere said, “Your sorrow for sin has saved you.” She was a woman of great humility. She came behind the Lord and washed His feet, as though she felt herself only able to be a menial servant to perform works of drudgery, and to find a pleasure in so serving her Lord. Her reverence for Him had reached a very high point. She regarded Him as a king, and she did what has sometimes been done for monarchs by zealous subjects—she kissed the feet of her heart’s Lord—who well deserved the homage. Her loyal reverence led her to kiss the feet of her Lord, the sovereign of her soul, but I do not find that Jesus said, “Your *humility* has saved you.” Or that He said, “Your *reverence* has saved you.” He put the crown upon the head of her *faith*, and said expressly, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

My second text refers to a blind man who was notable for his earnestness. He cried, and cried aloud, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” He was notable for his importunity, for they who would have silenced him, rebuked him in vain; he cried so much the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” But I do not discover that Christ attributed his salvation to his prayers, earnest and importunate though they were. It is *not* written, “Your prayers have saved you.” It *is* written, “Your faith has saved you.” He was a man of considerable and clear knowledge, and he had a distinct apprehension of the true character of Christ—he scorned to call Him Jesus of Nazareth, as the crowd did, but he proclaimed Him, “Son of David.” And in the presence of that throng he dared avow his full conviction that the humble man, dressed in a peasant’s garb, who was threading His way through the throng, was none other than the royal heir of the royal line of Judah, and was, indeed, the fulfiller of the type of David, the expected Messiah, the King of the Jews, the Son of David! Yet I do not find that Jesus attributed his salvation to his *knowledge*, to his clear *apprehension*, or to his distinct *avowal* of His Messiahship! No, He said to him, “Your *faith* has saved you,” laying the entire stress of his salvation upon his faith!

This being so in both cases, we are led to ask, what is the reason for it? What is the reason why, in every case, in every man that is saved, *faith* is the great instrument of salvation? Is it not, first, because God has a right to choose what way of salvation He pleases, and He has chosen that men should be saved, not by their *works*, but by their *faith* in His dear Son? God has a right to give His mercy to *whom* He pleases; He has a right to give it *when* He pleases; He has a right to give it *in what mode* He pleases! And know this, O sons of men, that the decree of heaven is immutable and stands fast forever—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.” To this there shall be no exception! Jehovah has made the rule, and it shall stand; if you would have salvation, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved”; but if not, salvation is utterly impossible to you. This is the appointed way; follow it because it leads to heaven; refuse it and you must perish! This is God’s sovereign determination, “He that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” Jehovah’s will be done! If this is His method of grace, let us not kick against it! If He determines that faith shall save, so let it be! Only, Good Master, create and increase our faith!

But while I attribute this to the sovereign choice of God, I do see, for Scripture plainly indicates it, a reason in the nature of things why faith should thus have been selected. The apostle tells us it is of *faith* that it might be of *grace*. If the condition of salvation had been either feeling or works, then such is the depravity of our nature that we should inevitably have attributed the merit of salvation to our works or our feelings! We would have claimed some *credit* for our salvation! It matters not how low the condition may have been, man would have still considered that there was something *required* of him, that something *came* from him, and that, therefore, he might take some credit to himself! But no man, unless he is demented, ever claims credit for believing the truth of God! If he hears that which convinces him, he is

convinced; and if he is persuaded, he is persuaded—and he feels that it could not well be otherwise. He attributes the effect to the truth and the influence used; he does not go about and boast because he believes what is so clear to him that he cannot doubt it. If he did so boast of *spiritual* faith, all thinking men would say at once, “Why do you boast in the fact of having believed, and especially when this believing would never have been yours if it had not been for the force of the truth of God which convinced you, and the working of the Spirit of God which compelled you to believe?” “Faith is chosen by Christ to wear the crown of salvation because—let me contradict myself—it *refuses* to wear the crown! It was Christ who saved the penitent woman! It was Christ who saved that blind beggar! But *He* takes the crown from His own head, so dear is faith to Him, and *He* puts the diadem upon the head of *faith*, and says, “Your faith has saved you,” because He is absolutely certain that faith will never take the glory to herself, but will again lay the crown at His pierced feet, and say, “Not unto myself be glory, for You have done it! You are the Savior and You alone!”

In order, then, to illustrate and to protect the interests of sovereign grace, and to shut out all vain glorying, God has been pleased to make the way of salvation to be by *faith*, and by no other means! Nor is this all; it is clear to everyone who chooses to think that in order to the renewal of the heart, which is the chief part of salvation, it is well to begin with faith, because faith, once rightly exercised, becomes the mainspring of the entire nature. The man *believes* that he is forgiven. What then? He feels *gratitude* to Him who has pardoned him. Feeling gratitude, it is but natural that he should hate that which displeases his Savior—and should *love* intensely that which is pleasing to Him who saved him; so that faith operates upon the entire nature and becomes the instrument in the hand of the regenerating Spirit by which *all* the faculties of the soul are put into the right condition! As a man thinks in his heart so is he, but his thinking comes out of his *believing*! If he is put right in his believing, then his understanding will operate upon his affections and all the other powers of his manhood, and old things will pass away and all things will become new through the wonderful effect of the faith which is of the operation of God. Faith works by love and through love it purifies the soul, and the man becomes a new creature. Do you see, then, the wisdom of God? He may choose what way He will, but He chooses a way which at once guards His grace from our felonious boasts, and on the other hand, produces in us a holiness which otherwise never would have been there!

Faith in salvation, however, is not the meritorious *cause*; nor is it in any sense the *salvation* itself. Faith saves us just as the mouth saves from hunger. If we are hungry, bread is the real cure for hunger, but still it would be right to say that *eating* removes hunger, seeing that the bread, itself, could not benefit us unless the mouth should eat it. Faith is the soul’s mouth whereby the hunger of the heart is removed. Christ is also the bronze serpent lifted up—all the healing virtue is in Him—yet no healing virtue comes out of the bronze serpent to any who will not look. So the *looking* is rightly considered to be the act which saves. True, in the deepest sense, it is Christ lifted up who saves—to Him be all the glory—but without looking to Him you cannot be saved, so that—

“There is life in a look,”

as well as life in the Savior to whom you look! Nothing is yours until you appropriate it; if you are enriched, the thing appropriated enriches you; yet it is not incorrect but strictly right to say it is the *appropriation* of the blessing which makes you rich! Faith is the hand of the soul. Stretched out, it lays hold of the salvation of Christ—and so by faith we are saved. “Your faith has saved you.” I need not dwell longer on this point. It is self-evident from the text that faith is the great means of salvation.

II. WHAT KIND OF FAITH WAS IT that saved these people? I will mention, first, the essential *agreements*, and then, secondly, the *differentia*, or the points in which this faith differed in its *external* manifestations in the two cases. In the instances of the penitent woman and the blind beggar, their faith was fixed, alone, in Jesus. You cannot discover anything floating in their faith in Jesus which adulterated it—it was unmixed faith in Him! The woman pressed forward to *Him*; her tears fell on *Him*; her ointment was for *Him*; her unloosed tresses were a towel for *His* feet; she cared for no one else, not even for the disciples whom she respected for His sake. Her whole spirit and soul were absorbed in Him. He could save her; He could blot out her sins; she believed Him, and she did it unto Him. The same was the case with that blind man. He had no thought of any ceremonies to be performed by priests; he had no

idea of any medicine which might be given him by physicians; his cry was, “Son of David, Son of David.” The only notice he took of others was to disregard them and still to cry, “Son of David, Son of David.” “What will you that I shall do unto you?” was the Lord’s question. And it answered to the desire of the blind man’s soul, for he knew that if anything was done, it must be done by the Son of David! It is essential that our faith must rest alone on Jesus; mix anything with Christ and you are undone! If your faith shall stand with one foot upon the rock of His merits, and the other foot upon the sand of your own duties, it will fall and great will be the fall, too! Build wholly on the rock, for if so much as a corner of the edifice shall rest on anything besides, it will guarantee the ruin of the whole—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good!”*

All true faith is alike in this respect.

The faith of these two was alike in its confession of unworthiness. What did she mean by standing behind Him? What did her tears mean, her ever flowing tears, but that she felt unworthy to draw near to Jesus? And what did the beggar’s cry mean, “Have mercy on me”? Note the stress he lays upon it. “Have *mercy* on me.” He does not claim the cure by merit, nor ask it as a reward; he appealed to *mercy*! Now I care not whose faith it is, whether it is that of David in his bitter cries of the 51st Psalm, or whether it is that of Paul in his highest exaltation upon being without condemnation through Christ—there is *always* in connection with true faith a thorough and deep sense that it is *mercy*, mercy alone, which saves us from the wrath to come! Dear hearer, do not deceive yourself! Faith and boasting are as opposite to one another as the two poles; if you come before Christ with your righteousness in your hands, you come without faith! And if you come with faith, you must also come with confession of sin—for true faith always walks hand in hand with a deep sense of guilt before the Most High. This is so in every case! Their faith was alike, moreover, in defying and conquering opposition. Little do we know the inward struggles of the penitent as she crossed the threshold of Simon’s house. “He will repel you,” the stern, cold Pharisee will say, “Get out of here, you whore! How dare you defile the doors of honest men!” But whatever may happen, she passes through the door; she comes to where the feet of the Savior are stretched out towards the entrance as He is reclining at the table—and there she stands. Simon glanced at her—he thought his glance would scare her off—but her love to Christ was too well rooted to be withered by him. No doubt he made many signs of his displeasure, and showed that he was horrified at such a creature being anywhere near him! But she took no notice of him; her Lord was there, and she felt safe. Timid as a dove, she trembled not while He was near; she returned no defiant glances for Simon’s haughty looks! Her eyes were occupied with weeping. She did not turn aside to demand an explanation of his unkind motions, for her lips were all engrossed with kissing those dear feet. Her Lord, her Lord, was all to her! She overcame through faith in Him, and held her ground; she did not leave the house till He dismissed her with, “Go in peace.”

It was the same with the blind man. He said, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” They cried, “Hush! Why these clamors, blind beggar? His eloquence is music, do not interrupt Him! Never man spoke as He is speaking! Every tone rings like the harps of the angels. Hush! How dare you spoil His discourse?” But over and above them all went up the importunate prayer, “Son of David, have mercy upon me,” and he prevailed! All true faith is opposed; if your faith is never tried, it is not born of the race of the church militant. “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith,” but it is indicated in that very declaration that there must be *something to overcome*, and that faith must wage war for its existence! Once more, the faith of these two persons was alike in being openly avowed. I will not say that the avowal took the same form in both, for it did not—but still it was equally open. There is the Savior and there comes the weeping penitent; she loves Him. Is she ashamed to say so? It may bring her reproach; it will certainly rake up the old reproaches against her, for she has been a sinner. Never mind what she has *been*, or who may be present to see her! She loves her Lord and she will show it; she will bring the ointment, and she will anoint His feet, even in the presence of Pharisees, Pharisees who would say, “Is this one of the disciples of Christ? A pretty convert to boast of! A fine conquest this, for His kingdom! A harlot becomes a disciple! What next? What next?” She must have known and felt all that, but still there was no concealment, for she loved her Lord and she would avow it! And so in the very house of the

Pharisee, there being no other opportunity so convenient, she comes forward and without words, but with actions far more eloquent than words, she says, “I love Him; these tears shall show it; this ointment shall diffuse the knowledge of it, as its sweet perfume fills the room; and every lock of my hair shall be a witness that I am my Lord’s and He is mine.” She avowed her faith.

And so did the blind man. He did *not* sit there and say, “I know He is the Son of David, but I must not say it.” They said, some of them contemptuously, and others indifferently, “It is Jesus of Nazareth.” But he will not have it so. “You Son of David,” he says! And loud above their noise I hear him cry like a herald proclaiming the king, “Son of David.” Why, sirs, it seems to me he was exalted to a high office! He became the herald of *the* King, and proclaimed Him, and this belongs to a high officer of State in our country! The blind beggar showed great decision and courage; he in effect cried, “Son of David You are Son of David! I proclaim You Son of David! You shall be proclaimed, whoever may deny it! Only turn Your eyes, and have mercy upon me!” Are there any of you here who have a faith in Christ which you are ashamed of? I also am ashamed of *you*—and so, also, will Christ be ashamed of you when He comes in the glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him! Are you ashamed to claim that you are honest? Then I think you must live in bad company, where to be a rogue is to be famous! And if you are ashamed to say, “I love my Lord,” I think you are courting the friendship of Christ’s *enemies*, and what can you be but an enemy yourself? If you love Him, say it! Put on your Master’s regimentals! Enlist in His army, and come forward and declare, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Their faith was alike, then, in these four particulars—it was fixed alone on Him; it was accompanied with a sense of unworthiness; it struggled and conquered opposition, and it openly declared itself before all comers.

By your patience I shall now try to show the *differences* between the two faiths as to their manifestations. First, the woman’s faith acted like a woman’s faith; she showed tender love and the affections are the glory and the strength of women. They were certainly such in her. Her love was intense, womanly love—and she poured it out upon the Savior. The man’s faith acted like a man’s in its determination and strength. He persisted in crying, “You Son of David!” There was as much that was masculine about his faith as there was of the feminine in the penitent’s faith—and everything should be in its order and after its season. It would not have been right for the woman’s voice to be heard so boldly above the crowd; it would have seemed out of place for a man’s tears to have been falling upon the Savior’s feet. Either one or the other might have been justifiable, but they would not have been equally suitable. But now they are as suitable as they are excellent! The woman acts as a godly woman should; the man like a godly man. Never let us measure ourselves by other people. Do not, my brother, say, “I could not shed tears.” Who asked you to do so? A man’s tears are mostly within, and so let them be—it is ours to use other modes of showing our love. And, my sister, do not say, “I could not act as a herald and publicly proclaim the king.” I doubt not you could do so if there were need, but your tears in secret, and those wordless tokens of love to Jesus which you are rendering are not less acceptable because they are not the same as a man would give! No, they are the *better* because they are more suitable to you; do not think that all the flowers of God’s garden must bloom in the same color or shed the same perfume.

Notice, next, that the woman acted like a woman who had been a sinner. What more meet than tears? What fitter place for her than at the Savior’s feet? She had been a sinner—she acts like a sinner. But the man who had been a beggar acted like a beggar. What does a beggar do but clamor for alms? Did he not beg gloriously? Never one plied the trade more earnestly than he! “Son of David,” he said, “have mercy on me!” I should not have liked to have seen the beggar sitting there weeping; nor to have heard the penitent woman shouting! Neither would have been natural or seemly. Faith works according to the condition, circumstances, sex, or ability of the person in whom it lives—it best shows itself in its own form, not in an artificial manner—but in the natural outflow of the *heart*! Observe, also, that the woman did not speak. There is something very beautiful in the golden silence of the woman which was richer than her silver speech would have been. But the man was not silent; he spoke. He spoke out and his words were excellent. I venture to say that the woman’s silence spoke as powerfully as the man’s voice. Of the two I think I find more eloquence in the falling tears and unbraided hair wiping the Savior’s feet than in the cry, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Yet both forms of expression were equally good. The silence was best in the woman with her tears, and the speech best in the man with his confident trust in

Christ. Do not think it necessary, dear friend, in order to serve, to do other people's work. What your own hand finds to do, do it with all your might. If you think you can never honor Christ till you enter a pulpit, it may be just possible that you will afterwards honor Him best by getting *out* of it as quickly as you can! There have been persons well qualified to adorn the religion of Christ with a lap stone on their lap who have thought it necessary to mount a pulpit—and in that position have been a hindrance to Christ and His gospel! Sister, there is a place for you; keep to it; let none push you out of it. But do not think there is nothing else to do except the work which some other woman does! God has called her, let her follow God's voice—He calls you in another direction, follow His voice there. You will be most like that other excellent woman when you are most different from her. I mean, you will be most truly *obedient* to Christ, as she is, if you pursue quite another path.

There was a difference, again, in this. The woman gave—she brought her ointment. The man did the opposite—he begged. There are various ways of showing love to Christ which are equally excellent tokens of faith. To give Him her ointment, and give Him her tears, and give Him the accommodation of her hair was well; it showed her faith, which worked by love. To give nothing, for the beggar had nothing to give, but simply to *honor* Christ by appealing to His bounty and His royal power, was best in the beggar. I can commend neither above the other, for I doubt not that both the penitent and the beggar gave Christ their whole *heart*—and what more does Jesus ask from anyone? The thoughts of the woman and the thoughts of the beggar were different, too. Her thoughts were mainly about the past, and her sins—therefore her tears. To be forgiven, that was her point. His thoughts were mainly about the present, and did not so much concern his sin as his deficiency, infirmity, and inability—and so he came with different thoughts. I do not doubt that he thought of sin, as I dare say she, also, thought of infirmity. But in her case the thought of sin was uppermost, and therefore the tears; in his the infirmity was uppermost, and therefore the prayer, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” Do not, then, compare *your* experience with that of another! God is a God of wonderful variety! The painter who repeats himself in many pictures has a scarcity of conception, but the master artist scarcely ever sketches the same thing a second time. There is a boundless variety in genius, and God, who transcends all the genius of men, creates an infinite variety in the works of His divine grace. Look not, therefore, for likeness everywhere.

The woman, it is said, loved much, and she proved her love by her acts. But the man loved much, too, and showed *his* love by actions which were most admirable, for he followed Jesus in the way, glorifying God! Yet they were different actions. I do not find that he brought any box of ointment, or anointed Christ's feet; neither do I find that she literally followed Christ in the way, though no doubt she followed Him in spirit. Neither did she, with a loud voice, glorify God as the restored blind beggar did. There are differences of operation, but the same Lord; there are differences of capacity, and differences of calling, but the same Lord. By this reflection I hope you will be enabled to deliver yourselves from the fault of judging one, by another, and that you will look for the *same faith*—but not for the same development of it!

So interesting is this subject that I want you to follow me while I very rapidly sketch the woman's case and then the man's, not mentioning the differences, one by one, but allowing the two pictures to impress themselves separately upon your minds. Observe this woman; what a strange compound she was! She was consciously unworthy, and therefore she wept, yet she drew very near to Jesus. Her acts were those of nearness and communion—she washed His feet with her tears, she wiped them with the hairs of her head—and meanwhile she kissed them again and again. “She has not ceased,” said Christ, “to kiss My feet.” A sense of unworthiness and the enjoyment of communion were mixed together! Oh, divine faith which blends the two! She was shame-faced, yet was she very bold; she dared not look the Master in the face as yet—she approached Him from behind. Yet she dared face Simon and remain in his room, whether he frowned or not! I have known some who have blushed in the face of Christ who would not have blushed before a judge, or at the stake, if they had been dragged there for Christ's sake. Such a woman was Anne Askew, humble before her Master, but like a lioness before the foes of God! The penitent woman wept; she was a mourner, yet she had a deep joy; I know she had, for every kiss meant joy! Every time she lifted that blessed foot and kissed it, her heart leaped with the transport of love! Her heart knew bitterness for sin, but it also knew the sweetness of pardon! What a mixture! Faith

made the compound; she was humble—never one more so—yet look how she takes upon herself to deal with the King, Himself!

Brothers and sisters, you and I are satisfied, and well we may be, if we may wash the *saints'* feet, but she was not. Oh, the courage of this woman! She will pass through the outer court and get right to the King's own throne—and there pay her homage, in her own person, to His person, and wash the feet of The Wonderful, The Counselor, and The Mighty God! I know not that an angel ever performed such a service, and therefore this woman takes preeminence as having done for Jesus what no other being ever did! I have said that she was silent, and yet she spoke; I will add she was despised, but Christ set her high in honor, and made Simon, who despised her, to feel little in her presence! I will also add she was a great sinner, but she was a great saint! Her great sinnership, when pardoned, became the raw stuff out of which great saints are made by the mighty power of God! Finally she was saved by faith, so says the text, but if ever there was a case in which James could not have said, "Shall faith save you?" and in which He must have said, "Here is one that shows her faith by her works," it was the case of this woman! There she is before you! Imitate her faith, itself, though you cannot actually copy her deeds!

Now look at the man. He was blind, but he could see a great deal more than the Pharisees who said they could see! Blind, but his inward eyes saw the King in His beauty, saw the splendor of His throne, and he confessed it. He was a beggar, but he had a royal soul and a strong sovereign determination which was not to be put down! He had the kind of mind which dwells in men who are princes among their fellows! He is not to be stopped by disciples, no, nor by apostles! He has begun to pray, and pray he will till he obtains the blessing he seeks! Note well that what he knew, he avowed; what he desired, he pleaded for; what he needed, he understood. "Lord, that I might receive my sight." He was clear about his needs, and clear about the only person who could supply them! What he asked for, he *expected*, for when he was bid to come, he evidently expected that his sight would be restored, for we are told by another evangelist that he cast away his beggar's cloak! He felt he should never need to beg again! He was sure his eyes were about to be opened! Lastly, what he received he was grateful for, for as soon as he could walk without a guide, he took Christ to be His guide and followed Him in the way, glorifying Him! Look on both pictures. May you have the shadows and the lights of both, as far as they would tend to make you, also, another and distinct picture by the same artist, whose hand, alone, can produce such wonders!

III. WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US IN REFERENCE TO FAITH? It teaches us, first, that faith is all important. Do, I pray you, my hearers, see whether you have the precious faith, the faith of God's elect! Remember there are not many things in Scripture called *precious*. There is the precious blood and there goes with it the precious faith; if you have not that, you are lost! If you have not that, you are neither fit to live nor fit to die! If you have not that, your eternal destiny will be infinite despair! But if you have faith, though it is as a grain of mustard seed, you are saved. "Your faith has saved you." Learn, next, that the main matter in faith is the person whom you believe. I do *not* say *in* whom you believe; that would be true, but not quite so scriptural an expression. Paul does *not* say, as I hear most people quote it, "I know *in* whom I have believed." Faith believes *Christ*. Your faith must recognize Him as a person, and come to Him as a person, not resting merely in His teaching, or only His work, but in Him! "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." A personal Savior for sinners! Are you resting on Him alone? Do you believe Him? You know the safety of the building depends mainly upon the foundation, and if the foundation is not right, you may build as you will, it will not last. Do you build, then, on Christ, alone? Inquire about that as a special point.

Observe, next, that we must not expect exactly the same manifestation in each convert. Let not the elders of the church expect it; let not parents require it from their children; let not anxious friends look for it. Do not expect it in yourself! Biographies are very useful, but they may become a snare. I must not judge that I am not a child of God because I am not precisely like that good man whose life I have just been reading! Am I resting on Christ? Do I believe Him? Then it may be the Lord's grace is striking out in quite a different path for me than that which has been trod by my brother. It may illustrate other phases of its power and show to principalities and powers the exceeding riches of divine love.

IV. And, lastly, the matter which sums up all is this—if we have faith in Jesus, we are saved and ought not to talk or act as if there were any question about it! “YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU.” Jesus says it. Granted, you have faith in Christ, and it is certain that faith has saved you. Do not, therefore, go on talking and acting and feeling as if you were *not* saved! I know a company of saved people who say every Sunday, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.” But they are *not* miserable sinners if they are saved! For them to use such words is to throw a slight upon the salvation which Christ has given them! If they are saved sinners, they ought to be rejoicing saints! What some say, others do not say, but they act as if it were so. They go about asking God to give them the mercy they have already obtained, hoping one day to receive what Christ assures them is already in their possession, talking to others as if it were a matter of question whether they were saved or not, when it cannot be a matter of question! “Your faith has saved you.” Fancy the poor penitent woman turning round and saying to the Savior, “Lord, I humbly hope that it is true.” There would have been neither humility nor faith in such an expression! Imagine that blind man, when Christ said, “Your faith has saved you,” saying, “I trust that in future years it will be found to be so.” It would be a belying at once of his earnest character and of Christ’s honesty of speech! If you have believed, you are saved! Do not talk as if you were not, but now, take your harp down from the willows and sing unto the Lord a new song!

I have noticed in many prayers a tendency to avoid speaking as if facts were facts. I have heard this kind of expression, “The Lord has done great things for us, and therefore we desire to be glad.” The text is, “The Lord has done great things for us, and therefore we *are* glad.” And if the Lord has done these great things for us, our right is to be glad about them, not to go with an infamous, “if,” upon our lips before the Lord who cannot lie! If you are dealing with your fellow creatures, suspect *them*, for they mostly deserve it. If you are listening to *their* promises, doubt them, for their promises go to be broken. But if you are dealing with your Lord and Master, never suspect *Him*, for He is beyond suspicion! Never doubt His promises, for heaven and earth and hell shall pass away, but not one jot or little of His Word shall fail! I claim for Christ that you cast away forever all the talk which is made up of, “buts,” and “ifs,” and “perhaps,” and “I hope,” and “I trust.” You are in the presence of one who said. “Verily, verily,” and meant what He said! He is “the amen, the faithful and true witness.” You would not spit in His face if He was here, yet your, “ifs,” and “buts,” are so much insult cast upon His truth! You would not scourge Him, but what do your doubts do but vex Him, and put Him to shame? If He lies, never believe Him! If He speaks the truth, never doubt Him! Then shall you know when you have cast aside your wicked unbelief that your faith has saved you, and you will go in peace!

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 7:36-50; 18:35-43.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK” 18 (VER. I), 536, 586.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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